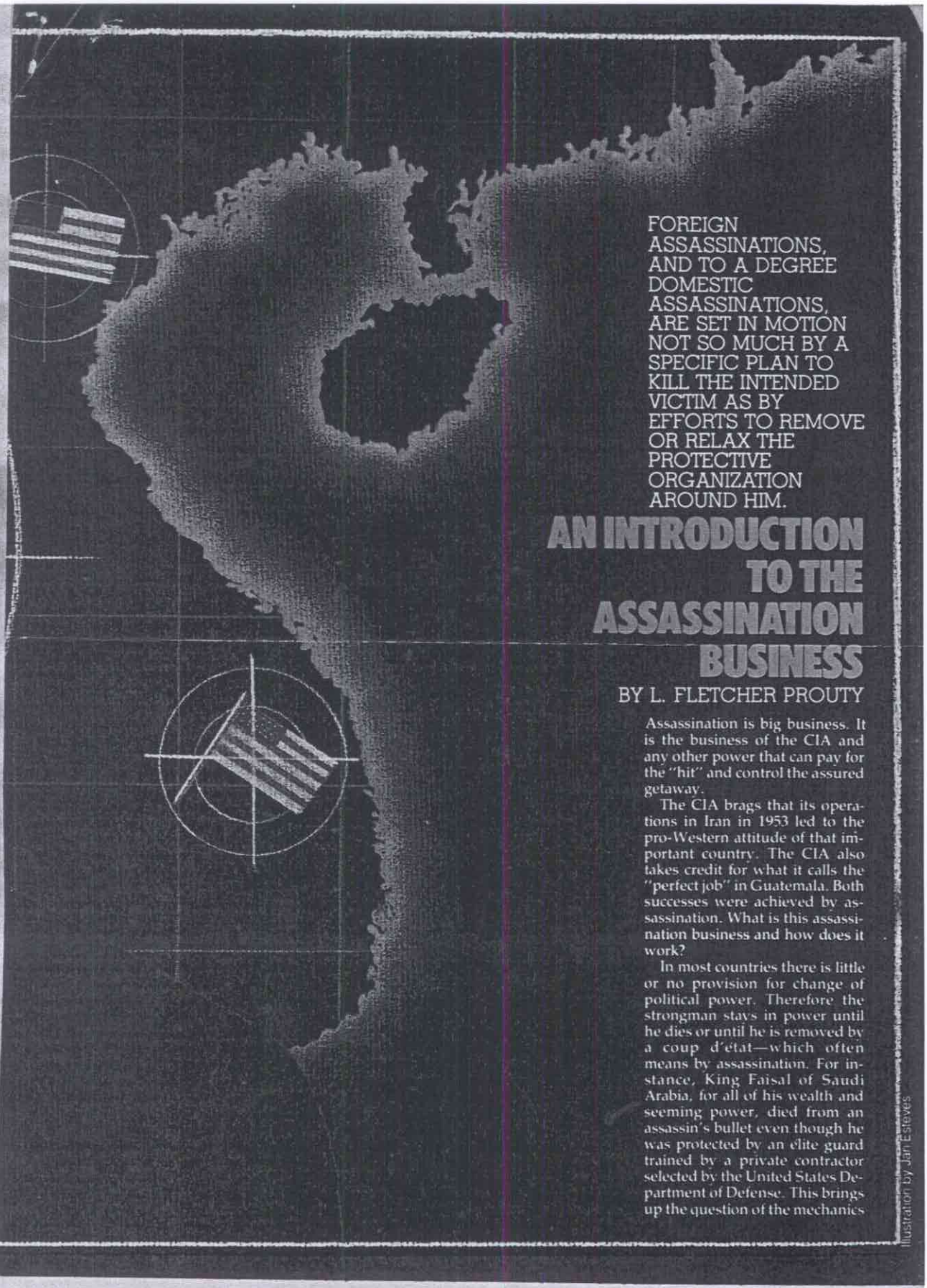

FOREIGN ASSASSINATIONS, AND TO A DEGREE DOMESTIC ASSASSINATIONS, ARE SET IN MOTION NOT SO MUCH BY A SPECIFIC PLAN TO KILL THE INTENDED VICTIM AS BY EFFORTS TO REMOVE OR RELAX THE PROTECTIVE ORGANIZATION AROUND HIM.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ASSASSINATION BUSINESS

BY L. FLETCHER PROUTY

Assassination is big business. It is the business of the CIA and any other power that can pay for the "hit" and control the assured getaway.

The CIA brags that its operations in Iran in 1953 led to the pro-Western attitude of that important country. The CIA also takes credit for what it calls the "perfect job" in Guatemala. Both successes were achieved by assassination. What is this assassination business and how does it work?

In most countries there is little or no provision for change of political power. Therefore the strongman stays in power until he dies or until he is removed by a coup d'état—which often means by assassination. For instance, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, for all of his wealth and seeming power, died from an assassin's bullet even though he was protected by an élite guard trained by a private contractor selected by the United States Department of Defense. This brings up the question of the mechanics

Illustration by Jan Esteves

GALLARY PROUTY IS NOW WITH GALLARY
9/75 VAGUE/INSIPID ARTICLE.

"The autopsy was routine: suicide. A high government official, recently promoted, was found alone in his house, and with his rifle beside him. A single bullet had shattered his head. There were no other signs of violence. A poorly typed note to his wife and son lay on the table near him. The hastily scribbled signature was his own. But the 'suicide' was an assassination."

Foreign assassination, and to a degree domestic assassinations, are set in motion not so much by a specific plan to kill the intended victim as by efforts to remove or relax the protective organization around the target. Thus, if the CIA secretly lets it be known that it is displeased with a certain ruler and that it would not act against a new regime, some cabal will certainly move against him. Firstly, such CIA sentiment encourages cabals into action and, secondly, it frightens the existing "élite corps." Most palace guards are hated because they are oppressive. When they learn that their CIA support is being removed or weakened, they think of themselves first and begin to head for exile, leaving the ruler vulnerable to the designs of a cabal. This is how the passive "displeasure" of the CIA kills. The same applies to domestic assassinations. Consider the following event.

The autopsy was routine: suicide. A high government official, recently promoted, was found alone in his house, dead and with his rifle beside him. A single bullet had shattered his head. There were no other signs of violence. A poorly typed note to his wife and son lay on the table near him. The hastily scribbled signature was his own. But the "suicide" was an assassination. After his promotion, the official had found papers in the files of his predecessor that showed that the law had been broken, that huge payoffs had been made, and that cases had been judged on the basis of favoritism and bribery. Consequently, a major industry had suffered grievously. An earlier administration had accepted this corruption as part of its technique of staying in power.

The new official, a fair and honest man, had been deeply troubled by what he had found. He had told his superiors and was stunned when they told him to keep his mouth shut, that they would take care of things. He had begun to drink heavily, and when he was drunk, he had talked. He had become tense. But he worked long hours and went through all the cover-up files. He reconstructed what had happened and prepared a complete report and had just about finished it. He did much of his work late at night at home.

On one of those evenings his wife had gone off on a visit and his son was at college.

The phone call was calm and official-sounding: "This is the police. Have you heard from your son recently? Well, something has happened."

The policeman said he would come right over to talk about it, and added that he was out of uniform and was driving an unmarked car. Yes, he would have identification: Fairfax County Police.

The car pulled up quietly. There was a quick knock on the door. The policeman entered, showed his identification and was invited to sit down. At the split second when the official turned to usher the "policeman" into the house, he was hit a sharp blow on the back of the head. He suffered a massive concussion and was dead. The "policeman" went to a closet where he knew a rifle was kept (the house had been well cased). The rest was simple. He hoisted the body up on the end of the rifle with the muzzle in the victim's mouth. One shot blew the top of the head off, removing evidence of the first blow. The suicide note had already been typed on the official's typewriter and the signature had been lifted from another paper signed with a ball point pen.

In moments the "policeman" was on his way. The unmarked car was left in back of the Forrestal building, where it had been taken from a pool of cars, and the assassin was on his way by taxi to Washington National Airport. He shuttled on the last flight to New York. He had already made arrangements for a series of flights that would take him to Athens. Less than twenty-four hours later, he was on the beach south of the city, among old friends and acquaintances in the modern world's equivalent of the Assassin Sect. He was a faceless, professional, multinational "mechanic." He earned good money and was convinced he was doing an essential job for the power center that he believed would save the world from communism. This story is, in most particulars, true.

Some time ago it was revealed that the CIA had been issued a number of identification kits in the name of the Fairfax County, Virginia, police department. This does not necessarily

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mean the CIA planned to use those identities for the purpose of assassination. In fact, it isn't clear what the CIA planned to do with those documents.

The CIA has many gadgets in its arsenal and has spent years training thousands of people how to use them. Some of these people, working perhaps for purposes and interests other than the CIA's, use these items to carry out burglaries, assassinations, and other unlawful activities—with or without the blessing of the CIA.

Crimes such as these, some of which have remained open for years, cannot be solved by any one individual. But there are patterns and motives that serve to expose methods. In 1963, about one month before President John F. Kennedy was murdered in Dallas, a prominent Washington lawyer died. It was ruled a suicide because it appeared that he had put his own rifle in his mouth and pulled the trigger. His name was Coates Lear, and he was a law partner of Eugene Zuchert, then Secretary of the Air Force. Lear knew a lot about special airlift contracts and about the plans for Kennedy's fatal visit to Texas. Then, for unexplained reasons, he began drinking excessively. And when he drank, he talked. Soon he was dead.

The same pattern fits the case of William Miles Gingery, the scenario of whose death we have outlined above. He had been promoted to chief of the office of enforcement of the Civil Aeronautics Board. He had found many irregularities in that office when he took over, and he was scheduled to appear before Senator Edward M. Kennedy's Committee of Administrative Practices and Procedures.

Gingery, a nondrinker, had begun drinking and was obviously terribly upset. One night he was found dead. His death, in early 1975, was ruled a suicide; it was found that he had put the muzzle of his rifle into his mouth and fired.

These are interesting cases. There were many reasons why both of these men might have been assassinated, and they both died in the same manner. That type of "suicide" is one of the trademarks of the professional "mechanic," the kind of killer who works in the international assassination game.

We hear much today about the CIA and the subject of assassinations. The agency has been linked to the assassination in 1963 of Ngo Dinh Diem, the then president of South Vietnam, and of his brother Nhu. The Diems were killed in October 1963. During the

"President Kennedy was murdered by the deliberate breakdown of the protective system that should have made an assassination impossible."

summer of 1971 Charles Colson and E. Howard Hunt, among others, were interested in seeing what could be done to forge and alter official State Department messages to make it appear that President John F. Kennedy was directly implicated in these assassinations. This is an important point. If the White House wanted so badly to tie in a dead president to that plot, it must have known then that President Kennedy was *not* involved and that records proved that he wasn't. The timing of this "dirty tricks" project is interesting. Some months previous, the *New York Times* had published the Pentagon Papers. The *Times* version of the Papers contained a somewhat detailed but mixed-up version of the events in Saigon during the late summer of 1963, just before the Diems were killed. Anyone reading those papers carefully would discover that the CIA had been close to the assassination plan and that it had men on the scene. But nowhere in the Pentagon Papers is there any message or directive that states in so many words, "The Diems will be assassinated." Even lacking this explicit document, many researchers will still conclude that the CIA was mixed up in the affair, and will conclude also that Kennedy did not order the murders. In 1963 Hunt was an active CIA agent and was deeply involved with the then former Director of Central Intelligence, Allen Dulles, whom Kennedy had fired.

So when the Nixon White House directed Hunt to forge State Department records in order to make it appear that JFK *had* directed the assassination of the Diems, the White House knew what it was doing, the CIA knew what it was doing, and Hunt most certainly knew what he was doing. But they goofed.

Even if they had succeeded in making it appear that JFK had ordered the killing of the Diems, it would not have stood up, because that is not how political assassinations are done. The clue is that assassination is a murder of an enemy of the sect (and this can mean many things today), and that it is performed as a sacred religious duty. No one has to direct an assassination—it happens. The active role is played secretly by permitting it to happen. Take the case of the Diems.

By the summer of 1963 the Diem regime had been in full control of South Vietnam for ten years and the country was going from bad to worse. By August 1963 memoranda were being circulated in the government; they were unmarked, with no classification, and were hand-carried from person to person. These memos stated such things as, "We must find a way to get rid of the Diems." This was the summer of extreme and fanatical discontent in Vietnam, including Buddhist uprisings and self-immolations.

The situation led to a series of inquiries from the CIA in Washington to Saigon in order to assess the opposition—what its strength might be and whether any of its prospective leaders might be better suited for the interests of the United States than were the Diems.

The CIA, which had placed the Diems in power, was severely split over this problem. One faction wanted to keep Diem and go along with his further demands. Another was ready to drop him and begin again with someone else. There were two favorites in Washington and many more in Saigon. Thus the ground work for an assassination began.

Word got out that the United States "might" withdraw its support of the Diems. This played into the hands of every Saigon cabal. But it did something more important. As the word got out, the people affected most were those who benefited from the Diem regime. The Diems' secret police, their élite guard, and the Diems' inner circle began to realize that they had better move fast. They had been oppressors, murderers. They had stolen hundreds of millions of dollars. Without the support of the United States, the CIA, and the Diems these inner élite were dead. As word began to get around Saigon,

everyone began to think of evening their scores against the hated Diems. Death was in the air. As the élite began to fade away, the Diems' strength was dissipated rapidly.

Yet in Washington, removed from the harsh reality in Saigon, it seemed only wise to study the situation from every angle. As August gave way to September, President Kennedy vacillated, the State Department did little, and the CIA kept firing out messages to its agents on all sides. Gradually a plan took shape. Madame Nhu, who had ridiculed the Buddhist victims by saying that if they wanted to "barbecue" themselves it was none of her business, suddenly realized that it might be a good time to take a long trip to Europe and the United States. This was the first phase. Next would be to get the Diems out of the country. Plans were made for them to attend an important meeting in Europe and they received formal invitations. A special plane was to fly them there.

As their departure date approached, the CIA instructed its agents to work closer with the prospective new regimes. This hastened the disintegration of the Diems' élite guard. Then, for reasons that have never been clear, the Diems having gone as far as the airport, turned, stepped back into their car, and sped to their palace. They must not have understood how the game worked. If they did not leave the country, they would be dead. They returned to an empty palace. All of their guard had fled. The actual killing was a simple thing—"for the good of the cause." The United States and the CIA could wash their hands of it, for they had nothing to do with it. Like all assassinations, it just happened. In Washington the White House had tried to "save" the Diems, and by so doing, had preordained their deaths.

This is the assassination scenario and it works in almost all cases, even when there is no elaborate plan. It would have seemed that the White House, and especially an old professional like E. Howard Hunt, would have known that it had happened that way and that changing the records would only have implicated them deeper than they already were by the summer of 1971.

And now, in 1975, there has been a flood of charges about assassinations. Of course the CIA has been involved. It made it its business to get close to the élite guards of a great many of the Third World countries. As long as these nation's leaders play the game, like King Hussein and the Shah of Iran, all goes well; but if one of them gets out of line, or if some cabal begins to grow in power and offer what might seem a better deal, then, as in the case of the Diems, the power of the United States will be withdrawn. Then, without doubt, the King is dead.

Most Americans are not aware of the fragility of Third World governments. Many have a military no larger and no more effective than a good-sized army band. Many have a "King's Guard" that is inadequate. The most trusted of the guard control the ammunition supplies; every time ammunition is issued for training, a close count is kept of expended rounds. Therefore no matter how wealthy the king may be, or how much wealth his country may possess in valuable raw materials, it will not assure his security. Rather, his money tends to threaten his life.

Thus these puny sovereigns must appeal to some greater power for their protection. For many years the United States, usually through the CIA, has provided the training for the élite guard. Without his guard, King Hussein of Jordan would have been dead or deposed long ago. His guard is trained by the CIA, even including paratrooper training by a clandestine military assistance program provided by the United States Air Force and the Army, though it is under CIA control. Similarly, many rulers in Asia, Africa, and Latin America owe their positions and in most cases their lives to the United States and the CIA, and most recently, to private corporations hired to train, and thereby control, the "élite guard."

This is how it begins; then comes the escalation. An élite guard is a small organization. As the ruler realizes his vulnerability, like the Diems and like the now deposed Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, he begins to look beyond the guard. He discusses an increase of his small and unskilled army with his "trainers"—the CIA. They are quick to say that he should have a larger army and that they can get him a military assistance program from the United States, provided he pledges undying loyalty. Now the program begins to pay off. A modest military assistance program of, say, fifty million dollars is begun. Of course, the entire amount is spent in the United States for American equipment. An old rule in the military assistance program is that whenever a piece of equipment is provided, ten times its cost will be spent for spare parts before it wears out. This is where the manufacturing companies make a real killing, for with spare parts they can charge whatever they want.

The next escalation is as follows: if the ruler of one country has been given a fifty-million-dollar program, each of his neighbors asks for similar programs for self-defense. Since World War II this has been a trillion-dollar business. Meanwhile, trade missions from the United States begin to work over the client states to see what natural resources can be acquired and for what price, while the CIA works with selected American manufacturers to portion out various franchises, such as Coca-Cola and Singer Sewing Machines. Through this device other selected families in the client country are put on the road to becoming millionaires and powers in their own country. This creates power centers that at times are played off against each other, as the CIA sees fit. Eventually, the structure explodes, the élite guard weakens, and unless the ruler is a hard-headed pragmatist and leaves immediately, he will be assassinated.

Since World War II, there have been hundreds of "coups d'états"—a euphemism for assassination. That list will grow as long as the United States does its diplomatic work clandestinely. Why else has Henry Kissinger "shuttled" from country to country in the Middle East? If his relationship with each of these countries is an undercover relationship, then he cannot meet with them publicly and in a group.

Eventually, practitioners of assassination by the removal of power reach the point where they see that technique as fit for the removal of opposition anywhere. That was why President Kennedy was killed. He was not murdered by some lone gunman or by some limited conspiracy, but by the breakdown of the protective system that should have made an assassination impossible. Once insiders knew that he would not be protected, it was easy to pick the day and the place. In fact, those responsible for luring Kennedy to Dallas on November 22, 1963 were not even in on the plan itself. He went to Texas innocuously enough: to dedicate an Air Force hospital facility at Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio. It was not too difficult then to get him to stop at Fort Worth—"to mend political fences." Of course, no good politician would go to Fort Worth and skip Dallas. All the conspirators had to do was to let the right "mechanics" know where Kennedy would be and when and, most importantly, that the usual precautions would not have been made and that escape would be facilitated. This is the greatest single clue to that assassination. Who had the power to call off or drastically reduce the usual security precautions that always are in effect whenever a president travels? Castro did not kill Kennedy, nor did the CIA. The power source that arranged that murder was on the inside. It had the means to reduce normal security and permit the choice of a hazardous route. It also has had the continuing power to cover up that crime for twelve years. ■